Promoting Horticulture

A brief survey completed by members of ASHS about careers in horticulture, suggested how we could improve the perception and promotion of horticultural careers. Using your feedback, ASHS, along with Longwood Gardens, National Junior Horticultural Association, American Public Gardens Association, American Horticultural Society, and AmericanHort started a national study of horticulture. Our first step was to send a letter and brief white paper to nearly 800 botanic gardens; horticultural associations, businesses, and media; and universities and 2 year colleges asking for their agreement of the project. The response was and continues to be overwhelmingly positive for this work, including an article in the Philadelphia Inquirer that was copied in additional media, such as HispanicBusiness.com. We are especially encouraged by businesses, associations, botanic gardens, and individuals who not only recognized this issue, but have started training programs, scholarships, promotions, and other activities to promote horticulture, especially horticultural careers.

Working on a national basis, we will define the current perception of horticulture within and outside of the industry. From youth and general public with no affiliation to horticulture to those in industry and academia, we will determine the current perception of horticulture, especially horticultural careers. The second part of the initiative will be to develop an educational and marketing program that will change the limited and narrow perception of horticulture to the reality of what it is really entails. We are aware of similar initiatives: American Floral Endowment’s memorable video "Murder, Sex and Greed;" Planet, and ANLA, along with ASHS, developed the Landlovers.org, a career website for the landscape industry. Bracy Nursery’s (Amite City, LA) "Sell the Benefits" promotes the often overlooked benefits of plants; and The Pattie Group’s training programs for young people are examples of independent businesses and market segments addressing the broad tapestry of horticulture. Cal Poly’s Department of Horticulture and Crop Science developed the "Learn, Do, Lead" slogan, one any parent would be proud to show to their son or daughter.

Changing the perception of horticulture is a big goal. We DO NOT want to re-invent the wheel or overlook what has already been done. We want to learn from what has been done and develop a national program with Common Core educational components for teachers to open the door to horticulture for K–12 students and for guidance counselors to see the opportunity and the need for students to pursue horticultural careers.

In June 2014, FleishmanHillard was selected as the communications firm to develop the national initiative including research, education, advocacy and marketing of horticulture. During 2014-15 research is being conducted with focus groups at national horticulture conferences.

YOUR VOICE NEEDS TO BE HEARD! Here’s how you can participate:

1. Send us your ideas for who should know about this initiative, including possible sponsors.

2. Donate to Seed Your Future...the national promotion of horticulture. All donations are tax deductible and go through the American Society for Horticultural Science.

We know the wonder and benefits of horticulture and we want everyone: young people, young adults, college-bound, and the general public to realize that horticulture that feeds our bodies and our souls is a career worth pursuing.

Click here to download White Paper - Promoting Horticulture in the United States